

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD  
CONNECTICUT**

**FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS**

(Ft. and Ac.)

**CODE 655**

**DEFINITION**

A temporary or infrequently used route, path or cleared area.

**PURPOSE**

- Provide routes for temporary or infrequent travel by people or equipment for management activities.
- Provide periodic access for removal and collection of forest products.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

Trails and landings including skid trails are applicable on forest land. They typically connect to an Access Road-560.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes**

**Laws and Regulations.** All Federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations, including local inland wetland agency regulations, governing the construction and use of this practice as well as setbacks from wells, surface water and property boundaries shall be followed. Planned work shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws and permit conditions and requirements. **The landowner shall obtain all necessary permits prior to construction or any land clearing activities.**

Trails and landings will be of a size, gradient, number and location to accomplish the intended purpose. Avoid locating trails and landings on poorly suited soils of low-bearing strength and sites such as wetlands, riparian areas, critical wildlife habitat, or other environmentally sensitive areas. Locate trails on the contour to the greatest extent possible and incorporate

breaks in grade (rolling dips or rolled grades) for trails on slopes. Skid logs uphill (with front ends off the ground) as practicable to minimize mechanical displacement of soil. Trails and landings will be set back from water bodies and water courses. Stream crossings, if necessary, will be minimized in size and number.

Assure safe ingress and egress from trails and landings to junctions with access roads. Refer to the Connecticut NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 560, Access Road for travel-ways including logging spur roads needing construction design and possibly surfacing to accommodate frequent, intensive, or repeated vehicular traffic.

Trails and landings shall be located and minimized in number and size to reduce adverse onsite and off-site impacts such as accelerated erosion, slope failure, water quality and riparian area degradation, stream channel and streambank damage, hydrologic modification, aesthetics, unacceptable damage to advance regeneration or residual growing stock, or fragmentation of wildlife habitat.

Those trails and landings intended or anticipated for management activities in subsequent years shall be designated for reuse to minimize the need for new trails and landings and associated site impacts.

Timing and use of equipment shall be appropriate for site and soil conditions to maintain site productivity and minimize soil rutting, erosion, displacement and compaction.

Drainage and erosion control measures shall be integrated with trails and landings and located to minimize detrimental effects of concentrated flow, erosion and sedimentation rates both during and after trail/landing use. After usage,

stream crossings will be restored and stabilized. Refer to applicable drainage and erosion-sedimentation prediction technology and Connecticut NRCS Conservation Practice Standards such as 342, Critical Area Planting, 587, Structure for Water Control 578, Stream Crossing and 484, Mulching as well as state forestry Best Management Practices.

### CONSIDERATIONS

Consider impacts to wildlife from increased fragmentation of the forest stand. Creation of openings can benefit some wildlife species (e.g., early successional and edge species) yet be detrimental to others (e.g., forest interior species).

Trails and landings, particularly after usage, may be utilized and managed for wildlife food and cover plantings. Refer to appropriate Connecticut NRCS Conservation Practice Standards such as, 645, Upland Wildlife Habitat Management and 647, Early Successional Habitat Development/ Management.

Properly located trails and landings of sufficient width and location may be utilized and managed as firebreaks.

Favor native species for revegetating trails and landings. Measures will be used to protect against invasive species.

### PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

To the extent practical, specifications shall conform to NRCS National Engineering Handbook Part 642

### AS BUILT DRAWINGS

As built drawings shall be prepared which show all pertinent elements and elevations as actually installed. A copy shall be provided to the owner / operator upon construction completion.

### OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An Operation and Maintenance (O&M) plan shall be prepared for, reviewed and signed by the landowner or operator. The plan shall provide specific instructions for operating and maintaining the system to insure proper function as designed. At a minimum, the O&M Plan shall address:

Regular and timely inspections for adverse effects will be conducted with trails and landings and associated measures maintained or restored as necessary.

Trails and landings utilized and managed as firebreaks will be properly maintained to accomplish this purpose while maintaining acceptable mitigation of other concerns.

Access to trails and landings shall be controlled when and where needed for erosion abatement, safety and liability, and reduced maintenance costs. Refer to Connecticut NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 472, Access Control as needed.

Trails and landings no longer needed may be decommissioned. Refer to the Connecticut NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 654, Road/Trail/ Landing Closure and Treatment, as needed.

### REFERENCES

Garland, John. 1997. Designated Skid Trails Minimize Soil Compaction. Woodland Workbook, Oregon State University Extension Service, EC1110.

University of Minnesota. 2002. Broad-Based Dips. Forest Management Practices Fact Sheet #6, Managing Water Series.